What counts as English in the English-medium university: Implications for teaching and learning

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This article problematises English in the English-medium university. It reports on a study that investigated English as it was articulated and rearticulated across policies and practices at an Australian university. The analysis found the English that emerged had particular characteristics: it inhered certain themes and not others; had specifications and exclusionary powers; afforded speaking rights and statuses; and contained strategies for new possibilities and manoeuvre; in short, it formed a discourse (Foucault 1972) that both produced and reproduced the prevailing linguistic landscape. The study examined one lecturer's manoeuvres within these conditions to address the English language needs of international students. English is deeply implicated in globalised interactions and transactions, and a powerful driver of international education. The argument in this paper is that English must recognised as a powerful constituent of the academic experience and cannot be taken for granted.

Keywords: discourse; English; English as a lingua franca; Higher Education; international students

Introduction

English is ascendant as the language of globalisation (Fishman, 1998-1999). It has power (Kachru 1992) evident in the world-wide demand for English qualifications and English usage in business, science, technology, media, diplomacy, sport and tourism (Jenkins 2003; Tomlinson 2006). In a globally-networked world, English is the lingua franca, mediating interactions and transactions between people around the world. Indeed, most of the world's English communication is now between speakers using English as a second or additional language (ESL/EAL) without a native speaker present (Jenkins 2003). With the increased use

of English by speakers of other languages and the morphing of sounds, vocabulary and grammar, English is becoming 'Englishes'.

One influential attempt to capture the diversity of English use has been Kachru's (1992) typology using three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The circles are geographically-orientated and represent dominant groupings of users of English: as a native language (for example, Australia); as a second language (for example, Singapore); and as a foreign language (for example, Thailand). In Expanding Circle countries such as Thailand, English has little or no official function. Nevertheless, it is highly prevalent as a lingua franca facilitating communication between speakers of different languages.

Within scientific research, English has become the language of publications and databases, which means that the dissemination of research to an international audience requires knowledge of field-specific English. The International Federation on Documentation (FID), an organisation which keeps track of information distribution, reports that nearly 85% of all scientific and technological information in the world is written or abstracted in English (Kaplan 2001). For nations pursuing development agendas, this means not only accessing and understanding scientific and technological information in English but also understanding English-based knowledge systems. A whole new cadre of English-proficient, scientifically- and technologically-savvy information managers becomes necessary to comprehend and operationalise this information (Kaplan 2001).

The ascendancy of English has sparked much political debate, particularly around issues of standards, exclusion and new forms of imperialism (e.g. Phillipson 1992). Concerns have been raised about whether the continued supremacy of native-speaker models of English in the age of increasing native speaker irrelevance is to do with issues of intelligibility or

rather, is a form of linguistic prejudice (Ammon 2000). One way this is achieved is through the privileging of Standard English.

Standard English is defined primarily in terms of its formal grammar and lexis which is institutionally sanctioned in dictionaries and grammars. Widdowson (1993, 164) refers to it as 'a kind of superposed dialect' which most native speakers are not born to but rather learn at school. It is largely the language of written English; indeed, Standard English is the only form of English used in writing (Kerswill and Culpeper 2009). Standard English is often used as an entry requirement for access to particular communities where native speakers act as custodians and gatekeepers (Widdowson 1993). At Australian universities, the gatekeeping role of English is evident in the English language entry requirements for international students. Within Higher Education worldwide, English is seen as a marketable good to attract fee-paying international students. Indeed Marginson (2006, 37) argues that university markets 'relentlessly reproduce the hegemony and homogeneity of English'. The global advantage of English means that 'the English-speaking universities exercise a special power expressed as cultural colonisation and the displacement of other languages in education and research' (Marginson 2006, 25).

Among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Australia currently has the highest percentage of international students in Higher Education (OECD 2011). International students comprise 21.4% of the university student population, more than three times the OECD average (6.4%) (Australian Education International (AEI) 2011a). For these students, the benefits of study are not just the degree itself but also the development of a foreign language usually English and the experience of living in another country, including the possibility of migration (Marginson 2006).

In 2010, the top ten source countries of students commencing study in Australian universities were, in decreasing order: China, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, South Korea,

Indonesia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Canada and Thailand (AEI 2011b). Asian countries contributed 82.4% of enrolments (Austrade 2010). Overall the fields that attracted most enrolments were management and commerce, engineering and related technologies, and information and technology (AEI 2011c). The list of source countries indicates that many of the students studying in Australian universities are from outer and expanding circle countries where English is either a second or foreign language with little official function beyond school and university curricula. In Australia the students enter a context where the centrality of English is rarely challenged (Smolicz 1995).

This paper aims to problematise English. Following Foucault (1972), the naturalness and pervasiveness of English invites a suspension of its continuity and a disturbing of its tranquillity. The changes currently characterising English mean that its nature and role in Higher Education cannot be taken for granted. The paper reports on a study that examined English as it was conceptualised and reconceptualised across a chain of Australian university texts including university policies, an course overview, assessment criteria, assignment guidelines, and lecturer assignment feedback. The representations of English were triangulated with students' accounts. The aim of the research was to identify what counts as English in the Australian university. What form does this English take and how does it operate? Moreover, what are the teaching and learning implications of this English, especially for university teachers and international students using English as a second or foreign language?

The Study

The study was conducted at a large metropolitan university to be known as The State University. The university had a total student population of almost 40,000 including 6000 international students (DEST 2005). The course in which the study was located was titled

Issues in Education and Leadership (also referred to as *Issues* in this paper) and part of a Master of Education (MEd) program. It ran for a 13-week semester and had an enrolment of 21: ten international students and 11 domestic with 11 women and ten men. The lecturer was a senior academic with a reputation for excellence in teaching. The six international students in the study were from Argentina, China, Mozambique, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. English was the first language of only one student – from Singapore. It was the third language of the woman from Mozambique, after Chuabo and Portuguese.

The data set was a written archive of university and course materials: The State University *Strategic Plan 2003-2007*, the *Issues in Education and Leadership* course overview, assessment criteria, assignment presentation guidelines, lecturer feedback on students' assignments, and transcripts of student interviews. Analysis involved methods of linguistically-oriented Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 2003) and discourse theory (Foucault 1972). The analysis focused on English and the ways it was represented and assumed power across the chain of texts. From a CDA perspective, genre chains highlight the networking of social practices and involve the transformation of language as a topic moves along the chain through successive genres (Fairclough 2003). Through this process of articulation and rearticulation, a discourse is appropriated, reproduced and modified. Changes in language can point to the emergence of a new discourse or technology and to changes in social practices. Conversely, continuity across the genres can indicate 'particular insulations' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, 119) around the discourse which contribute to its ongoing existence and reproduction. Such articulation processes are of interest in CDA because they indicate shifts, or not, in discourse as part of the wider social order.

Linguistically-oriented CDA methods oscillate between descriptions of linguistic features in texts and interpretations of the interactional and social context in which the text was produced (Fairclough 2003). A theoretically supported interpretation has explanatory

power: 'it … involves making invisible categories become visible' (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999, 67). The theoretical explanation most helpful in explaining the emergence and power of English in the university is Foucault's (1972) work on the formation of a discourse.

While much has been written about discourse, indeed we have experienced a discourse turn (Price 1999), Foucault's model most clearly explicates what a discourse is and how it comes into existence. This is helpful at a time when the term 'discourse' has lost some of its definition and explanatory potential. Shuttling between data, description and interpretation in the study, it became evident that Foucault's four 'rules' for the existence of a discourse were a convincing explanation of English in the contemporary university. The four conditions were (1) the emergence of English across multiple surfaces with specifications and thresholds of exclusion; (2) English's prescription and legitimation of particular subject positions; (3) the embracing and inhering of a set of concepts that establish English in particular ways, most notably as integral to successful academic practice; and (4) the ways in which English deploys various strategies for determining what is and what is not English that paradoxically provide new possibilities within the discourse. These insights help understand the constitution and consequences of English in the English-medium university.

From the *Strategic Plan 2003-2007* to *Issues in Education and Leadership* assessment criteria

The mission statement of The State University as it is enunciated in the *Strategic Plan 2003-2007* is:

> The mission of The State University is to create a community dedicated to achieving national and international levels of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, one that makes significant contributions to the intellectual, cultural, social and

economic life of the State of Windsor and the Australian nation.

The plan acknowledges the Higher Education context as one of 'competition, uncertainty and change' (p. 2) and lists as one of its key operational priorities the need to increase enrolments of international and postgraduate students. The strategic plan identifies the key capacities in graduates which are repeated in other policies such as the statement on academic integrity and plagiarism. The key capacities for graduates are presented in Table I. The recurrent statements contribute to and circulate understandings of how to be a student at The State University.

In terms of English, The State University's Strategic Plan makes no explicit mention of language. Reference to English is most specific in policies about international student enrolment, for example *English Language Proficiency Admission Requirements for University Programs* in which certain English language proficiency levels are mandated for award programs. Proficiency measures usually pertain to the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (a minimum of 6.5) and the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) (a minimum of 570). Policies also refer to English support programs that are available for international and Australian non-English speaking background (NESB) students.

Aside from statements about the gatekeeping role of English in international student admission procedures, language remains unacknowledged in the university's strategic plan. By its very absence, English is assumed; its naturalness points to hegemonic status within the university. This is despite the diversity of languages on campuses and in local indigenous and migrant communities; the centrality of English in the university mirrors the privileging of English in Australian society. The taken-for-grantedness of English raises questions about its ideological workings: how is the dominance of English reproduced; what are its effects; how can it be subverted to support people struggling to meet its demands? Or seen from another

angle, how can university teachers acknowledge and address English as it exists in their courses and the university more generally?

From policy documents, the analysis moved to texts associated with the *Issues in Education and Leadership* course. It was interested in the ways that articulations in the Strategic Plan were rearticulated in *Issues* texts. Table I lists the key capacities for graduates and their rearticulation in the *Issues* assessment criteria and the descriptors for the grades Distinction (Grade 6) and High Distinction (Grade 7). The graduate key capacities represent the norms established by the university for graduates. The assessment criteria rearticulate the norms in terms of practice and enactment at the course level. The alignment of capacities, criteria and grade descriptors is evident in Table I, and indeed, not surprising; it is after all, the role of a course to adhere to and implement the values espoused by the university. What is interesting is the consistency with which the ideas are adopted and rearticulated across the three texts. It indicates the continuity of concepts across dispersed 'surfaces' within the university. While the texts and their audiences and purposes differ, the themes remain consistent.

PLEASE INSERT TABLE I HERE.

The emphasis on practice and enactment at course level can be seen in the high density of nominalised verb forms (e.g. *identification*, *analysis*, *application*), that is, actions written as nouns. It can be argued that the predominance of verb forms constitutes a type of performativity (Ball 2003), where the emphasis is on 'doing' academic work in the *Issues* course. The performances of the students are shaped by the criteria and in turn measured by them. They form a 'grid of specification' (Foucault 1972) which divides and classifies different types of performed academic writing. The grid forms a 'regulative ensemble' (Aglietta 1979; in Ball 2003) charged with the task of reproducing the 'regime of truth' about academic writing and the idealised academic subject at The State University. Within

the criteria, as in the Strategic Plan, there are no explicit references to English or indeed, language. An implicit reference is the rearticulation of effective communication as written presentation and its exemplification as clear and logical essay structure, fluency of expression, and accurate referencing procedures.

From assignment guidelines to lecturer feedback

The only explicit reference to English in the *Issues* course overview is in the section on *Assignment presentation* about written communication that appears below.

Assignment presentation

Assignments should conform with word limits, be neatly presented and demonstrate a level of written expression that enables readers to understand the points being made. Successful written communication requires a level of adherence to the conventions of our common language. Attention should be paid to the conventions of standard written English, sentence structure, grammar, usage, appropriate style, and correct punctuation and spelling. If you experience difficulties in this area you should contact us some weeks before the posting date so that we can discuss assistance which may be available.

The reference to English is not to general English but to 'standard written English'. The paragraph is about 'successful written communication' in the *Issues* course and builds meanings through a chain of lexical references, and semantic and grammatical relations. Analysis of these relations shows that successful written communication is constructed as dependent upon adherence to the conventions of 'our' common language which is, in turn, linked to standard written English.

The relations between the sentences are elaborative (Fairclough 2003); they elaborate and exemplify the topic in the previous sentence. Through these relations, a logic is developed whereby standard written English is posited as equivalent to successful written expression: 'standard written English' becomes the umbrella concept for conventions on 'sentence structure, grammar, usage, appropriate style, and correct punctuation and spelling'. These relations establish a logic of equivalence (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; in Fairclough 2003) between 'successful written communication' and the 'conventions of standard written English'. The logic collapses and subverts difference (Fairclough 2003). Through the relation of equivalence, the discourse on successful written practice appropriates standard written English as a defining part of itself.

It is at this point that the two discourses internalise one another and become contingent upon each other. Successful written communication becomes the conventions of standard written English. Their relationship is dialectical and it becomes difficult to prise apart the issues that relate independently to English and to academic practice. The logic of equivalence sets up a process of internalisation and with its regulative apparatus preserves the hegemonic status of standard written English within the academic practices of Australian tertiary study.

The reference to 'our common language' in the paragraph is of interest. The context implies English is the common language; the use of the collective possessive pronoun 'our' establishes solidarity between the writer and the reader around English. In the *Issues* course, however, English was not the first language of a third of the class although everyone was an English user. In the paragraph, the choice of 'our' works ideologically – it creates divisions and exclusions based on English. Furthermore, 'our common language' is linked to 'standard written English' and referred to as an 'area' which might present difficulties. The reader/student who might experience the difficulties is not identified. The exclusionary power

implied in ‘our’ appeared misaligned with the views of the lecturer in the *Issues* course. A check revealed that the *Assignment presentation* page was generic and had been authored by the department for insertion in course overviews.

The lecturer for her part was critically proactive in her approach to students’ English and academic needs. She admitted that she was not a second language expert but through her experience with minority groups was aware of the difference between people’s knowledge and their expression of it in a second language. Her view of international students was that they came to Australia with interesting lives and backgrounds but were, in some cases, disadvantaged by English:

> I just always assume that (international students) have fascinating lives; that they come from interesting places; that they’re people with initiative and they start off on the back foot in terms of language.

The lecturer’s feedback on students’ assignments is the next link in the text chain analysed for its representation of English and its commensurability to the other forms emerging in the data. Of interest were the ways that the assessment criteria were applied and rearticulated. I focus in particular on an assignment by the Thai student Sonny that failed its initial submission. It was the first assessment item for the semester and an extended literature review on the topic ‘Leadership and management refer to complementary but distinct actions’. Students had to critically discuss the statement drawing on course readings, extended literature searches and their personal experience. The assignment was 2000 words and worth 40%.

The lecturer’s feedback consists of two parts: (1) a summative statement of the overall outcome of the assignment and (2) a list of numbered points that link to specific aspects of the assignment. The summative statement is presented in Table II and is constructed of

positive and negative evaluation statements. The positive evaluations are: a sound grasp of ideas; your argument; and the essay passing in terms of content. The negative evaluations are: the need to have your grammar and expression corrected; your essay not passing in terms of expression; and the need to refer a little more extensively to the readings and literature as you make your points. The lecturer uses the 'causative have' (Swan, 1995) to recommend that Sonny seek help to 'have' his grammar and expression corrected. She asserts that she will grade the paper after the editing has been completed.

PLEASE INSERT TABLE II HERE.

The analysis shows how despite Sonny's 'sound grasp of ideas', the failure of his assignment is grounded in his grammar and expression. The lecturer identifies these two elements – related to the criteria of written presentation – as well as more extensive referencing as the areas that need addressing before the assignment can be passed. Her general feedback is predicated on a list of specific points that she wrote as she read the assignment. The analysis indicates that most of the points contain two parts: (1) an assertion of a problem and (2) advice on how to overcome the problem. The points are listed in Table III, with the assertion and advice statements presented in the order they occurred in the lecturer's feedback, for example, 5a, 5b, 5c.

PLEASE INSERT TABLE III HERE.

The lecturer's feedback is effectively an interaction and knowledge exchange between her and the student; it has a problem and solution structure (Fairclough 2003). She explains the problems to Sonny and offers solutions on how he can fix them. The problem statements

index the categories of ‘grammar’ and ‘expression’ in her summative feedback but also include content, for example, Point 6 about participation. The lecturer’s problem assertions define and delineate what she considers *not* acceptable academic practice in the *Issues* course. Her advice functions as a type of teaching, a *beibringen* that inducts Sonny into an explicit understanding of course expectations. Her approach, complete with delayed grading, provides scaffolded assistance for improvement and gives Sonny time to effect these changes. As it happened, Sonny followed her advice and was awarded a ‘Pass’ grade on resubmission.

Two discourses appear to be at work in the lecturer’s feedback and assessment practices. The first rearticulates the policy line articulated in the course overview about standard written English as the instantiation of successful written communication. Sonny’s assignment is failed on the grounds that while his ideas are sound, his grammar and written expression are unsatisfactory. The second discourse foregrounds English language issues and is marked by explicit advice, editing support, and delayed grading. The lecturer’s approach is a response to the English language needs of the ESL students in her course. Indirectly her response might be linked to the internationalisation initiatives within the university, although she indicates that part of her motivation is the need to make new forms of knowledge available to all students. Her assessment practices evidenced in her summative and formative feedback can be seen as ‘a modification in the principle of exclusion … due to the insertion of a new discursive constellation’ (Foucault 1972, 67). Foucault’s point is that other possibilities are always available when new discourses present and insert themselves into the prevailing discourse. The presence of students with needs at odds with the criteria prompt the lecturer to create spaces and new interpretations of how the criteria can be met.

Not that she reneges on ‘standards’. She does not ‘soft mark’, that is, award grades that exceed the standard of the paper. Rather, the lecturer’s approach provides a rearticulation of the criteria that preserves the original definitions and delimitations of English-mediated

academic practice but reworks the definitions about how the conditions can be met. She finds new spaces in the existing regime to attend to students' language and academic needs without compromising the standards of academic work to which she is so committed.

Students' responses to English

The students' responses to English are complex. The language is not benign; rather, the students link English language proficiency to academic acculturation and success, accomplishment of course tasks, group membership, and personal legitimacy. For some, English is foregrounded and markedly at the core of their struggles to acculturate to the new academic conditions. For others, the language is assumed and their focus is orientated to the disciplinary demands of the course. English was the first language of the student from Singapore while the Argentinean had already completed a Master's degree in English. For both students, ardour was associated with managing the new practices of extensive reading and writing on the unfamiliar topic of leadership. The Vietnamese student had also completed a Master's degree in Vietnam that was largely English-medium. He also indicated few problems with English although he wanted more explicit instruction from the lecturer on the focus of assignments. The student from Mozambique had completed a postgraduate qualification in English in South Africa but was concerned about the extent of the reading and the difficulty of comprehending unfamiliar concepts.

For the Chinese and the Thai students, however, the balance of concern tipped towards the language itself. Interestingly both students used the word 'nonsense' to represent their initial use of English in Australia. The Chinese student characterised communication as the anxious negotiation of medium and meaning: "50% English; 50% ideas". For Sonny, introduced above, the link between speaking in English, classroom participation and group membership was particularly acute. He referred to himself as 'nobody' at the outset of the

course because of his inability to voice his ideas in class discussions. This self-attribution shifted, however, during the course thanks to facilitation by the lecturer and growing understanding of course practices: ‘right now I think I’m better, more action, more reaction in class’. His recommendation for Thai students was that they have ‘very excellent English, especially speaking’.

Implications for teaching and learning

The findings show that the university is a context characterised by the emergence and maintenance of a particular version of English. This English is presented as natural in policy documents and course materials and as such, has attained ascendancy and hegemonic status. It emerges across multiple sites in diverse practices and has positioning and exclusionary power. Central to the specifications of what counts as English is the relationship of equivalence between standard written English and successful written communication. Concepts of standards, writing and English have coalesced in the academic context to form a dominant discourse with heavily patrolled exclusionary thresholds. Assessment criteria and grading protocols define and sustain the limits of the discourse.

International students’ representations of English and its impact on their identities and academic practice indicate a discourse that impacts them significantly, some of them overwhelmingly. Interpretations of speaking rights are filtered through evaluations of and concerns about their English proficiency. Students with confidence in their English capabilities are focused primarily on disciplinary content and course requirements while others such as Sonny are engaged in the two-pronged task of attending to disciplinary content and assessment while simultaneously contending with language demands. For these students, aside from academic consequences, concerns about English are often related to self-representation, that is, the ways that comprehensibility and ways of being ‘heard’ impact

social positioning and relations with peers (Miller 2003). These concerns indicate particular understandings of the speaking rights and statuses afforded by the discourse. They indicate the students' gradual accrual of the discourse and associated practices on a cline from imaginings to recognition and 'rhetorical deployment' (Fairclough 2003) to enactment. The findings in the study show that even within a group of six, students' uptake of the English/academic communication discourse is varied.

Despite the explicit thresholds of exclusion contained within the English discourse, the analysis shows the lecturer employing strategies of assistance and possibility with second language students in the initial stages of taking up the discourse and its practices. Her engagement with the discursive conditions is paradoxical: it both reiterates them and unsettles them by bringing new interpretations to the ways that they can be achieved. She retains adherence to institutional conventions while simultaneously reconfiguring them to accommodate the English needs of students.

For university teachers with classes of students using English as a second and foreign language, awareness of English is crucial to understanding the range of demands facing students. Research shows that students often cite English as a key concern in their studies; indeed, when students have academic difficulties, both they and their lecturers blame the students' English language levels (Auditor-General 2002; Ballard 1987). This response has been critiqued for locating the problem solely with the students and absolving the institution of its responsibility to teach academic genres (Boughey 2002; Kettle 2011). Ryan and Viete (2009) argue that many academics use idealised notions of language fluency and sophistication to judge international students' language control. These judgements about proficiency often influence the ways the academics assess students and afford them rights of participation. With high enrolments of international students in Australian Higher Education and slight increases, even despite the Global Financial Crisis (AEI 2011c), English cannot be

taken for granted and must always be viewed critically for its part in valued ways of knowing, doing and being in the English-medium university. Language is heavily implicated in relations of power and has consequences for academic success, speaking rights and social inclusion. These consequences are particularly salient for international students using English as a second and foreign language in English-medium institutions where English is resolutely the language of instruction, interaction and assessment. The actions of the lecturer demonstrate possibilities for meeting the needs of diverse learners while adhering to the conventions of the academic 'game'.

Conclusion

This paper was directed at disturbing the tranquillity of English as it operates unchallenged in English-medium Australian Higher Education. Through a study of representations of English and their articulation and rearticulation across texts in one university, it built a picture of the ways English gathers meaning and power. It found that this version of English can be best described as a discourse through its complexity and conditions of existence: its alignment of themes across dispersed university documents and texts; its conceptualisation of successful academic communication as standard written English with effective definitions, delimitations, and regularity of practice; its impact on subjectivities and social positioning; and its inbuilt possibilities for change and innovation. It is hoped these insights inform academics' understandings of English and enhance their responses to the English language needs of students.

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Key capacities for graduates as enunciated in The State University *Strategic Plan 2003-2007*	Criteria for written assignments as listed in the *Issues* course overview	Criteria descriptors for the grades of Distinction (6) – High Distinction (7) as listed in the *Issues* course overview.
Independence and creativity	Identification, analysis, synthesis, application of key issues/knowledge	A thorough analysis of recent and relevant ideas from a variety of sources. A highly creative synthesis of appropriate ideas.
Critical judgement	Critical reflection	Evidence of ability to think in critically reflective ways in a variety of theoretical and practical educational situations. Taking ownership of ideas.
Effective communication	Written presentation	The student's work shows: (i) clear and logical structure (ii) fluency and written expression of a high order (iii) accurate referencing procedures.
Ethical and social understanding	Sensitivity to marginalised groups	Sensitivity demonstrated in obvious situations, and also in more subtle situations.
In-depth knowledge of field of study	Wide and appropriate reading	Extensive reading of appropriate literature. Reading ranges broadly beyond 'set' texts.

Table I. Graduate capacities recontextualised across assessment criteria and grade descriptors

Sonny I can see that you have a sound grasp of key ideas, and that you build and sustain your argument. However, it is very important for you to have your grammar and expression corrected – take advantage of the assistance offered to international students. I haven't corrected any of this, but it needs to be done. When you have done this, I'll assign a final mark to your essay. It passes in terms of content, but not in terms of expression. Also, I think you could refer a little more extensively to the readings and literature as you make your points. (Signature)

Table II. The summative evaluation of Sonny's assignment

Assertions of a problem	Advice for overcoming the problem
1a. These statements are self-evident, and don't add anything much to our understanding. You use these kinds of statements at several points in your essay	1b and my advice is to find other ways of making your points.
3c. It isn't sufficient simply to assert the points.	3a. You need to indicate by referring to literature, why this is the case 3b. (you need to indicate) by making an argument of your own, why this is the case.
	5a. Try not to use quotes as long as these ones; 5b try to make the points in your own words 5c. (try to) save quoting for special points.
6a. Participation is a very broad concept. A teacher can participate in the school's goals by teaching in the classroom, but this need not entail participation in the school's leadership or management.	6b. Try to be more specific about what you mean here.

Table III. The problem and solution structure of the feedback